United Nations A/HRC/37/G/6

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 April 2018

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh session
26 February–23 March 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Note verbale dated 29 March 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the written statement submitted by the "NGO" "FWTTE" (A/HRC/37/NGO/157), has the honour to forward, attached hereto, a written statement in reply to the above-mentioned "NGO" (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Greece kindly requests that the present note verbale and the annex thereto* be circulated as a document of the thirty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

GE.18-05712(E)
1805712

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 29 March 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Comments of the Greek Government in relation to the written statement A/HRC/37/NGO/157

It is deplorable that the "NGO" "FWTTE" continues to make biased and inaccurate references to a "Turkish community" in Thrace, thus clearly displaying not only a total ignorance of the international legal order but also lack of good faith on minority issues. It is in fact not the Greek Authorities but the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty, to which Greece fully abides by, that officially recognizes a Muslim minority in Thrace, not a Turkish one.

Greece fully respects international law, fundamental human rights, as well as minority rights and religious freedoms, a commitment carried out by both the State and civil society.

We have proven time and again our unwavering dedication to addressing issues pertaining to the Greek citizens that are members of the Muslim minority in Thrace, with full respect to the principle of equality and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty, the Greek Constitution and the religious and cultural background of the minority.

Furthermore, rule of law and freedom of association are fundamental principles of the Greek legal order, and as such apply to all citizens without any ethnic, cultural or religious discrimination, in compliance with the existing national and international legal frameworks. The Greek citizens belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace are considered equals before the law and are treated as such.

The progress that Greece has achieved towards the full implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the recommendations of the Council of Europe, is clear for all to see. The recent amendment of our Code of Civil Procedure, with the adoption of Law 4491/2017 is evidence that we keep addressing any issues which the muslim minority might have.

With regard to specific cases mentioned by the "NGO" "FWTTE", we note that it falls within the discretion of the associations in question to pursue any legal action pertaining to the recognition of their legal status before a domestic court or before the European Court of Human Rights.

Greece, for its part, will continue to step up its efforts in pursuing comprehensive minority policies for the Muslim minority of Thrace.